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Women, Choice and Lifestyle

Motivation to edit this issue of *Report* was born during my six years on the faculty of the School of Nursing of Kent (Ohio) State University. I frequently encountered women who were struggling with what seemed to be an impossible load of responsibilities. It was not unusual for these women to be studying, usually part time, working, often full time, in addition to being wives and mothers. Some of these students were already nurses with a diploma completing additional requirements for the bachelor of science in nursing, while others were just beginning the nursing program.

Some of these very busy women appeared to thrive in the middle of their many responsibilities. Others, however, seemed overburdened and their work suffered, including their performance as students, which was my immediate concern. I questioned whether or not they were safe and competent nurses in their employment, as distracted and stressed as they appeared in the student role. Further, I could not imagine how they were managing at home. Some had strong support from their spouses and were assisted by older children or extended family. Others, however, were juggling arrangements for the care of their small children. A few had financial resources, including that of their own employment, enabling them to purchase some home services such as cleaning.

I pondered about the reasons these women were needing to balance so many roles. Employment for many of them was essential to either support themselves and their children if they were divorced or separated or to supplement their husband's income. Further, employment for some was a source of fulfillment beyond that of interacting only with their small children at home. The high value currently placed by professional nursing on the baccalaureate degree and further graduate degrees led some of those who were already nurses to return to school. Often such pressures came from employers who required further education to hold certain positions in administration and/or staff

development. Others were just beginning their education to escape boring jobs, to continue their own personal development or to develop skills for possible future employment should it become necessary for them to support their family.

My observations led me to conclude that while some of these women were quite capable of balancing many roles with finesse, others were carrying far too many responsibilities and both they and their families were paying a high cost in stress and attenuated relationships. Why were they responding to so many demands? Did they have the freedom to choose which of the many voices calling for their time and energy they would heed? Had they consciously sifted through and identified their own values and how they had influenced their decisions? Where was the support each woman needed to develop her own skills and identity?

Some students related how their spouses were supporting them in their multiple roles, helping with meals and childcare and giving encouragement for their studies. Some mothers did their own "homework" along with their children as a form of mutual encouragement. Others seemed to be going it alone with little active support from family members. For them I felt sadness for their aloneness and anger at those who could have encouraged them.

I suspected that for some the motivating drive was a need to prove to themselves and others that they were persons of value. As nurses, they had internalized the often-repeated value of increased professional competence and status, along with messages urging women to break away from the traditional feminine role. Professional nursing journals carry frequent articles focused on power and how to get more of it. I certainly affirmed the efforts of these nurses to improve their skills and status by means of education (they helped to pay my salary). However, I sometimes wondered if being a better nurse was their goal or if they were responding in a reflex manner to yet another voice telling them how to be a person of worth.

Thus developed the seed of the idea for this issue of *Report*: women need the freedom to determine priorities and make choices among the many roles they are being asked to assume. The same could be said for men as well since pressure to produce more and more is not only a women's issue.

The freedom needed by women needs to be both internal and external. Inside herself each of us needs to feel secure

"Life demands honesty, the ability to face, admit and express oneself. It demands integrity—being integrated, having brought together and recognized our conflicting internal forces, and being integrated into a larger community of selves and life-forms. Life demands courage and vulnerability, because without them there can be no openness and no

connection; and it requires responsibility and discipline, to make choices and face the consequences, to carry out what we undertake. And finally, life demands love..." — *Starhawk, in Women's Consciousness, Women's Conscience. A Reader in Feminist Ethics.*

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enough to determine priorities and make choices. Outside, each of us needs to experience support and assistance as we carry out our roles. None of us can do everything. Each of us can do those things which release our gifts and abilities.

In this issue, several women share stories of the choices they have made, the lives they have built for themselves. Although each woman has chosen differently, each is confident that she is at the right place, doing the right thing for her particular needs as well as those of her family. Some have to do more balancing than others and some feel more stressed than others. Each realizes she must continue weighing the stresses and rewards of her current situation against alternative choices. Each is accepting of others who have set different priorities or made different choices.—
Arlene Miller ■

Arlene Miller, assistant professor of nursing at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., is working on a doctorate in religion and psychology at Temple University in Philadelphia. She is particularly interested in the relationship between religion and health. Arlene attends the Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church, where she serves as a deacon. She is also a member of the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns.

by Judith A. Keefer

Content in My Situation

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians that he had learned to be content in any and every situation. Although Paul's declaration related to his physical needs, the principle of contentment in all circumstances has helped me attain a sense of satisfaction with my present place in life.

I graduated from high school, attended college for two years, then went through a three-year nursing program. Afterwards I was married and for three years taught psychiatric nursing in a state hospital. During that time I took post-graduate courses that qualified me for teaching. At the end of the three years, our first son was born, followed by two more at two-year intervals.

My husband and I had agreed that I would not work outside our home when our children were young. However, this has not been without second thoughts. I sometimes compare myself with a nursing friend who went on to acquire a master's degree and to move into a position of significant responsibility in a county mental health program. She and her husband are rearing two children and she is actively involved in the church at the congregational level, as well as the denominational level where she serves as chairperson of a major board. She very



ably manages her responsibilities in all spheres. I am sometimes tempted to be envious of my friend's stimulating, challenging life.

During two different periods I worked part time, resigning both times because I could not reconcile my outside work with my work at home. I was not a good mother when I was employed because I was not relaxed; I was not content to let housework slip by just because I was tired. My husband worked 50 to 55 hours a week in his business so I did not expect him to help with housework. I rationally concluded that working outside the home was not appropriate *for me*.

I have always been actively involved in church life and committees, never having much opportunity to be bored

"...I am personally indifferent to the feminist movement because the black women in my family have always felt themselves to be more than their jobs. The feminist movement stresses non-traditional careers for women, equal pay for equal work and so on. Although those issues are important and would have greater impact on black women than white women if legislated (black women receive less pay than either black men or white women, and

also have less job mobility and career choice), the women in my family know that their humanness means more than 'being a professional.' I do not believe that the feminist movement has considered the possibility that there is more to life than that; so much energy is put into being a professional...." —Betty Geyer, San Francisco, Calif, in Update, Summer 1986, newsletter of the Evangelical Women's Caucus.

or to feel unfulfilled. Among other responsibilities I taught Sunday school, worked with my husband in the youth program and as a deacon couple, and directed our small group ministry.

Certainly I am not unique in my stabs of envy and my guilt over not using my education in a productive way. I've wondered just what I have missed by not having an outside career. Those doubts and questions cross my mind even now, but in a fleeting way. I know myself, I know that I do enjoy being a full-time homemaker and having time to serve as chairperson of the missions committee, to serve on our regional Board for Congregational Life, for listening to people, for having time to care, and time to take classes with my husband and to share in his pastoral ministry.

Our sons are now teen-agers. Our quantity of time together is not abundant, but the quality of time spent together needs to be superior. My being relaxed and content is important to that quality. Upon a recent move I was considering what the extent of my church and community involvement should be. I happened to be part of a psychodrama that helped me to see that for now my attention needs to continue to focus on my family. I am eager to see what my place will be in the future, but for the present I am content in my place because I am confident that it is God's place for me. ■

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by Arlene Miller

A Single Woman's Perspective

I don't have a choice! That is, for me there was never a question of whether or not I would work outside of my home. Being a single woman, the choice for me is not *if* but *where* I will seek employment.

At first glance I thought perhaps this was true only of persons like myself who have not married and who have

no children, but then I remembered my friend, Maria (not her real name). She doesn't have a choice either since she supports not only herself but her two children as well. Her choices are even more limited than mine because her educational preparation as a beautician in another country is not recognized in the United States.

Thus, while I can decide whether I will seek and/or accept employment in any number of settings because of my education, she is limited to a low-paying job in a company where she will never advance to a better salary. Oh, it is true that her company will reimburse her 80 percent of the cost of classes if she takes them. However, taking an evening class would require that she pay for child care for the two girls and she already has more expenses than her limited budget will cover. So that is out, at least until they are old enough to be alone for several hours in the evening. For now, Maria has little choice about whether or even where she will work.

I do have a choice. Not about whether or not I will work away from home but rather, where I will work. I also have many choices concerning how I will nurture those relationships which are meaningful to me. What do I need to do to support and care for my aging parents who live at some distance from me? How much time will I make available to my congregation and how much time for participating on a denominational board? How much of my energy should I give to Maria and her two lovely girls who need an American "aunt"? Should I be thinking about long-term goals when I plan my time, as well as responding to current opportunities? These questions and others all require that I search out what my values are, who I am, which people are important to me, and what God is asking me to do so that I can make choices about what activities I will undertake. Further, they require that I take stock of my resources and strengths so that I know "how much I've got to spend."

This ongoing work of assessing and planning is the foundation for making choices for the single, never-married woman, the single-parent mother, as well as for the married woman. None of us can have it all, most of us can have a lot over the span of a lifetime and some of us have very limited choices within which we must find our fulfillment with creativity and hope. ■

"We can bum along through life, getting by with a minimum of effort and letting others tackle the really big challenges. But to me, that's not really the kind of person Christ asks us to be. He gave his best and asks us to do the same. That does not mean being a superwoman. In fact, it may mean letting the dusting go in favor of writing a letter to Grandma or inviting a friend in for tea. It may mean saying no

to sitting on a committee in order to gain one night at home with the family, or to work on that master's degree."
—Melodie M. Davis, in *Working, Mothering and Other "Minor" Dilemmas*.

by Rebekah Basinger

Beyond the P.H.T. Degree

On May 15, 1986 my husband and I celebrated our fifteenth wedding anniversary—the sort of milestone that encourages “taking stock” of one’s life. I have found myself reflecting on the ways in which we have changed during our years together. One thing is certain, we are not the same people who exchanged rather traditional vows that spring day in Omaha, Neb. A lot of choices—some carefully thought through, others made haphazardly—have brought us to where we are today.

At the time of our marriage, I was prepared to support Randy during six years of graduate school. I assumed that when we had both earned our degrees—his a Ph.D. in philosophy and mine a P.H.T. (Putting Hubby Through)—I would begin my “real” life as a full-time homemaker and mother. Yet the choices I made during those first years of marriage, while far from radical, didn’t always mesh with my plans for an early retirement from the work-a-day world.

While Randy continued his full-time studies, I plugged away on my bachelors degree as a part-time student, graduating three years behind him. Soon after, I began a master’s program that I would finally complete five years and one state later. During those same years I began writing Sunday school curriculum on a free-lance basis for David C. Cook Publishing Company. The affirmation I received from these efforts did much to change my own expectations of what I wanted from life.

At the same time, Randy’s ideas about what a husband should and shouldn’t do were also changing. While I was tied to a 8-to-5 work day, his flexible class schedule gave him time to assume responsibility for most of the household duties. I don’t recall that we spent long hours talking about this—it just happened. Little did we suspect that this temporary lifestyle would become the norm for us.

Fortunately, we were not alone in our decision-making. During our first years together we encountered a number of individuals who helped us see that there are other

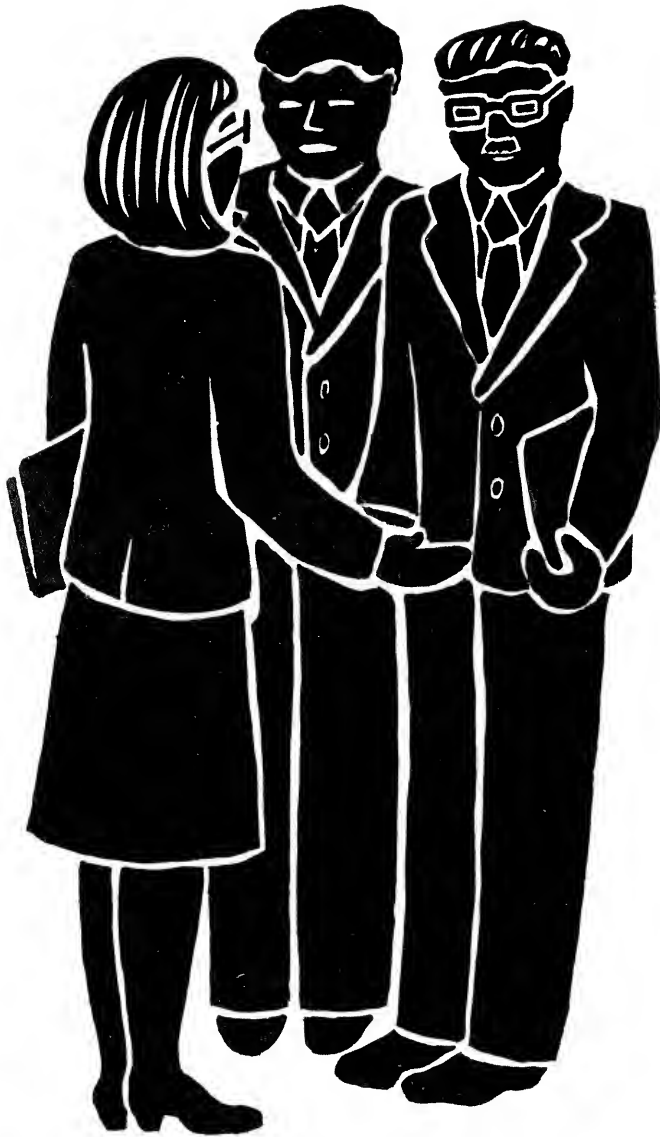
definitions of a “good” marriage than the one we had learned from our parents. Two of these individuals stand out in my memory. The first is Dr. David Schlaffer, Randy’s advisor at Trinity College in Deerfield, Ill. He encouraged Randy to consider my potential as well as his own as we planned for the future. The Schlaffer’s marriage—they both taught at the college—provided a model to which we referred often.

The other individual is Doris Rothlisberger, my advisor at Trinity College. She saw possibilities in me that I had never dreamed of and she challenged me to make the most of my talents. The fact that she believed in me did a lot to build my own self-confidence. Because of her faith in me I dared to make choices that I would never have considered otherwise.

And where have those choices taken me? Today I am a working mother employed as assistant to the president at Messiah College. I am a part-time graduate student at Temple University pursuing a doctorate in higher education administration. I teach an occasional Sunday school class and have written several times for *Rejoice!*, an inter-Mennonite devotional guide. I consider myself a happily married person as, I believe, does my husband. My sons, both of whom have been in daycare since they were infants, seem well-adjusted and content. Our life is hectic, yet somehow it all holds together.

Sometimes, in my weaker moments, I do wonder what we would be like if we had stuck to our original expectations for our marriage. No doubt our house would be tidier and our meals better planned. But would Randy be more successful in his career? Would he publish more or be a better teacher? Would the boys be better behaved or smarter? Would we spend more time working in our church? We’ll never know the answers to these questions. There is only one thing of which I am sure—I would not be a happier person.

I have found that I need the stimulation that comes from a challenging work situation. I enjoy being around other adults, discussing ideas and making things happen. I respect women who find their satisfaction from being at home, but that life is not for me. I also realize that many women do not have the same sort of job options that I have and I want to be sensitive to the stresses that working outside the home creates for them. I know, too, that some people



are offended by the way in which Randy and I have chosen to shape our marriage. I would like to build bridges of understanding with such individuals.

But, for better or for worse, we are a two-career couple. And so far, for us the good outweighs the bad. ■

Rebekah Basinger lives in Dillsburg, Pa. with her sons, Adam, 9, and Jay, 4, and her husband, Randall, who is an associate professor of philosophy at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa. They attend the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church.

by Arlene Miller

Velma Heisey: A Clear Sense of Personal Identity

Velma Heisey had hoped to go to India as a missionary. Rather than India, however, she used her nursing skills in the Philippines, where her clinic was located in a corner of her one-room home. Some years later she and her husband began a 14-year period of their lives among the Navajo people of New Mexico. Velma now lives near Mount Joy, Pa. and is an active member of the Cross Roads Brethren in Christ Church.

I was eager to hear Velma tell her story several weeks ago over breakfast at a local diner. I had heard her say earlier that she liked part-time employment in nursing because it was there that she was known for herself and not only as the wife of her husband or the mother of her daughter, both of whom are well-known in church and MCC circles. Velma had always seemed to me to have a clear sense and acceptance of her own personal identity. How did this vital woman who worked and lived much of her life before the current women's movement view her past choices and her life which grew out of them?

Velma's decision to enter nursing grew out of knowledge about the need for nurses in India, the focus of her early interest in missions. She moved from western Canada to the East where she completed her secondary education at Messiah Academy and then earned her nursing diploma at Niagara Falls. Following her graduation, she returned to her hometown of Kindersley, Sask. where she worked in a hospital for some time until learning of the need for nurses with MCC in the Philippines.

During her three years in the Philippines, Velma had sole responsibility for a small clinic in the mountains, two day's journey off the main road. Early in her service she delivered a live baby to a woman who had developed eclampsia seven months into her pregnancy but who had refused Velma's urging to go to the hospital in the lowlands. This event helped establish Velma's credibility with her fellow

villagers and the people in the surrounding area. For three years they came with wounds needing to be sutured and babies to be birthed.

After her first year in Abra Province in Luzon Island, Velma married Wilmer Heisey, a teacher also with MCC. She continued to operate the clinic out of the home which they shared with two single MCC women. Later, following the birth of their son, she cared for him along with doing her clinic work. Because both her work as a nurse and her work as a mother were done from her home, she was able to combine these roles comfortably. A local girl assisted them with laundry.

The Heiseys located in Mount Joy, Pa. after returning from the Philippines. While Velma had hoped to work part time in nursing during the two years Wilmer attended Elizabethtown College, she was unable to obtain a Pennsylvania nursing license without being a U.S. citizen. During those two years she worked at home caring for her home and family.



Two years later, the young family headed to New Mexico, where Wilmer had accepted the post of superintendent of the Navajo Brethren in Christ Mission. The last of their three children was born in New Mexico. During the 14 years that they worked among the Navajo, Velma's time was given to caring for her family, entertaining the many guests who stopped at the superintendent's home, helping with institutional projects such as laundry and butchering and visiting with Navajo people both in her home and in

the "camps." Only occasionally did she use her nursing skills. In comparing her work at the Navajo Mission to that of the Philippines, Velma remarked that she probably didn't feel as needed as she had in the Philippine setting.

From New Mexico the Heiseys returned to Mount Joy where Wilmer began administrative responsibilities with the Brethren in Christ Missions. One of their children was in junior high, another in high school and the third was in college. By this time Velma was able to obtain a Pennsylvania nursing license and while she did not want to work away from home full time, she did work several days a week. Through her contacts at work Velma learned to know the broader Mount Joy community. She enjoyed meeting and getting to know new people. Her work also gave Velma an identity of her own. This was especially important as both her husband and her daughter, Nancy, became more widely known within church and MCC circles.

During the years in which she worked part time, Velma assumed a more relaxed attitude to housework and did not worry if everything were not spotless or the children's rooms were messy. Her daughters also helped her some with the housework. Velma did feel it important to be home as much as possible with her children, particularly when they arrived from school. She felt badly about the times her husband had to prepare the evening meals due to her being away, and says she understands recent research showing that older married women experience high levels of stress because of their feelings of having to take care of everyone.

Velma said she knows the limits of her energy and has learned to set priorities and make choices. In entertaining, for example, her priority is paying attention to the guests and their comfort, rather than fussing about fancy food.

Velma feels good about who she is and about the choices she has made. She feels it has been her choice to focus most of her life on her family. She continues to find enjoyment in volunteer work with community agencies, at a local elementary school and in a nearby nursing home. Much of her time is given to church responsibilities, including the Missions Prayer Fellowship, a service organization called the Sunshine Band, the church board on which she served for two years and teaching Sunday school. ■



"We need new models. The alternative to Superwoman is the woman in touch with her own meaning—who creates her life from that place, who doesn't have to do it all because she knows creating in interdependence helps herself and others; who doesn't allow herself to get drained because she is not acting at the effect on her life but is sourcing

something that serves a larger vision. There's no name yet for this woman. Her face is not clearly seen though many women sense her developing presence." —Charlotte Kelly.

How Healthy is "Superwoman?"

Multiple Choice: According to the experts, juggling marriage, job and children is:

___ A. Healthy for women. Multiple involvements are invigorating to physique and psyche, challenging skills and abilities.

___ B. Unhealthy for women. Trying to do too much and be "all things to all people" causes serious stress that endangers psychological and physical health.

___ C. Either A or B, depending on who one listens to.

The correct answer is (c). To wit:

- "Contrary to popular belief, the triple roles of job, spouse and mother are linked with good health," report Lois M. Verbrugge of the University of Michigan and Jennifer H. Madans of the National Center for Health Statistics. (Schmid)
- "According to Marjorie Hansen Shaevitz, marriage and family therapist and author of *The Superwoman Syndrome*, virtually every woman in the United States falls victim to the stresses of trying to be too much to too many, often at risk to her own mental well-being and health." (Clegh)

Verbrugge and Madans, basing research on information collected in the U.S. National Health Interview Survey of 1977-1978, contend that employment has by far the strongest and most consistent tie to women's good health. They further found that those who are both employed and married are the healthiest of all categories of women: those who have children are just as healthy as those who do not.

On the other hand they found the combination of no job and no spouse is strongly linked to poor health, especially for women aged 25 to 34.

Although the two researchers admit that poor health may be a factor keeping women out of the workplace in the first place, they wrote that, "Involvement in activities that use one's skills and education, that offer social contacts and intimacy, and that provide income probably helps people maintain good health or even improve their health," (Schmid)

Their research seems to indicate that idleness can be more stressful than an active and involved life, even if that means balancing multiple roles.

Others disagree.

Marjorie Shaevitz, author and member of the California Commission on the Status of Women, says women who put in a full day at the office, coming home to children and husband and housework, are prey to a host of physical and psychological stresses, including chronic pain, fatigue, irritability, guilt, loss of interest in sex, feelings of being unappreciated and a constant level of low-grade anger at their spouses.

She says that concurrent with the trend of married women in the labor force, doctors are reporting an increase of stress-related illnesses in women, including headaches, pain symptoms and diseases resulting from smoking.

Shaevitz uses reports of a Stanford University study on "Sex Differences in Adaption to Work" that showed that women who attempt to integrate role demands of worker, spouse and mother "may be confronting stresses that pose serious hazards to their physical and psychological well-being." (as quoted in Cleigh) ■

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"So how do we work at reducing the myriad sources of guilt? One suggestion is to accept limitations. Who is capable of being a whiz on the job, a social butterfly, a perfect parent and an artist all at the same time? Guilty feelings can help us decide on priorities." —Melodie M. Davis, in *Working, Mothering and Other "Minor" Dilemmas*.

by Pauline Allison

The Balancing Act

From the time I became the wife of an aspiring minister, I was aware that I would need to juggle my nursing career with that of my husband's profession. While he has always encouraged me to follow my professional interests, it was in my estimation not always possible or desirable. The decision to stay at home during the early childhood of our three children was an important one, we felt. We chose to have a decreased budget in order to devote more time and attention to home and family life. While it took some personal resolve to put career on the "back burner," I became immersed in my family, our congregational life and the running of a busy parsonage. That was top priority.

After my husband decided to return to school, we made plans to move 600 miles away. Just prior to that move, I re-entered the nursing profession after a seven-year absence. Re-entry was difficult; so much had changed. Skills had to be refreshed and new procedures and techniques learned. I determined at that point to somehow stay in touch over the years, even if only as a casual or part-time employee.

I have since chosen to work the number of hours I can manage based on the demands of our congregation and family life, and the call of God. Juggling several responsibilities has not been without frustration. Sometimes I feel that I am barely managing. Our schedules have become considerably more complex as our children have gotten older. And I am also getting older!

At one point I worked full time as the nursing director of a small nursing home in Ohio while my husband attended school full time. Our children were at that time 6, 9 and 11, and we served a small congregation over the weekend. Although those days were perhaps no less hectic than our life now, they were physically exhausting with grade-school children.

The balancing act still continues, almost eight years later. We now live in a different area of the country and are pastoring a larger, more independent congregation. Our first child will enter college in the fall. With our family at

a different stage, I am working full time again, and my reasons for doing so are several.

As assistant director of nursing at a 484-bed long-term care facility, I enjoy the professional challenge, dealing daily with a fast-paced schedule and a multitude of decisions. But I must make a real effort to manage my time, giving diligence to my responses when I arrive home after an especially busy day.

I also continue to have a great interest in being involved in ministry with my husband. Our congregation is alive and active. I enjoy congregational relationships and activities. My biggest regret is that I have so little time to do what I really would like to do. I am anticipating the day when I can devote more time again to the relational needs that are ever present and the hurting persons that need a listening ear.

Even though life has brought for me its share of daily stresses in attempting to juggle career and home, I hope that I am learning how to handle these stresses. I don't always do it very well, but I am learning. ■

Pauline Allison lives with her family in Elizabethtown, Pa. Dale is pastor of the Elizabethtown Brethren in Christ Church.

by Emily Will

A Well-Rounded Lifestyle

Rachel Miller believes she and her husband, Jerry Lehman, have the best of all possible worlds. They each work at meaningful jobs—both on a part-time basis—and they share parenting and household duties. They each have plenty of time to spend with their two boys, now 5 and 4, complementing one another in what they offer to the children. (Rachel, for example, says she only grudgingly participates in "creative messes" like getting out the paints, brushes and water while Jerry relishes such activities.) They also have energy and time to devote to other endeavors which they value, such as gardening and church and family activities.

Rachel and Jerry did not necessarily map out such a course for their family life when they were first married. But they did start with certain shared values and gradually a



• For Further Reading

Davis, Melodie M. *Working, Mothering and Other "Minor" Dilemmas*. Waco, Texas: Word Books Publisher. 1984. Practical advice and inspiration from a woman who believes parenting and maintaining a career, while not easy, is rewarding.

Grollman, Earl A. and Gerri L. Sweder. *The Working Parent Dilemma. How to Balance the Responsibilities of Children and Careers*. Boston: Beacon Press. 1986. Addresses the major issues and problems of working parents from the perspective of the children themselves and offers creative suggestions for enriching the quality of family time.

Shaevitz, Marjorie Hansen. *The Superwoman Syndrome*. New York: Warner Books. 1984. Describes the stresses faced by the woman who wears many hats. Much of the book is devoted to time management advice.

compatible lifestyle has been shaped around those values, sometimes with considerable effort on their part and other times, by chance.

Rachel and Jerry ascribe to an alternative lifestyle characterized by economic simplicity, staying out of the rat-race, and centering on family and home. They are influenced by such journals as *Mothering*, which advocates home birth and shared parenting between father and mother. They are also supported and influenced by their church group, a small, tightly-knit fellowship of socially active Mennonites who often break the conventional mold as far as sex roles go. Several men in the group are currently or have been at one time full-time parents and homemakers, for example.

For several reasons, neither Rachel or Jerry are career-oriented. They enjoy the diversity of challenges that arises when one is a generalist rather than a specialist. Jerry said his father Paul provided a model for multiple involvements, having been: a milk man, a carpenter, a chicken farmer, a missionary/radio broadcaster/singer, a school teacher, a college professor, an insurance salesman, and a manager/maintenance person for an apartment complex. Jerry said he has been amazed at how many doors have been opened to himself to do part-time work in a variety of fields.

Jerry learned another benefit of being a generalist when he worked as a psychiatric aide in a hospital. Having considered a career in psychology, he noticed that as an aide he actually had more one-to-one interaction with the patients than did the therapists, who tended to relate to the patients in hour blocks of time. He decided that perhaps a specialized career in psychology might not offer him the fulfillment that he derived from these in-depth relationships.

A further reason why Jerry and Rachel have avoided careers is related to their desire for an economically simple lifestyle. A high salary usually accompanies a specialized career, they pointed out. Finally, they fear that careers become too draining and all-consuming, taking one away from friends and family.

Nonetheless, it was only by happenstance that the couple learned the benefits of sharing employment and parenting responsibilities. When Rachel became pregnant with Jebb, she quit her full-time job as an in-school suspension supervisor and assumed that she would do the full-time parenting. But the school district wanted her to come back so much that they negotiated part-time hours with her.

"I had worked there for three years and I really loved the job so when they offered it back to me on a part-time basis it seemed like it was coming to me on a platter. The offer made us look at the option of each of us having part-time employment, something which we might not have considered right away otherwise," Rachel commented.

Even though Jerry wanted to help care for Jebb and had been very much involved in his birthing, he went through several months of painful adjustment when he actually found himself at home with the baby.

"Right after Jebb was born, Jerry had post-partum blues," Rachel said. "He did not have meaningful work and he felt the responsibility of a new little family. In that first year it took him a couple of months before he felt happy to be at home with the baby, but after the initial adjustment Jerry was a comfortable and natural parent, hauling Jebb around in a backpack wherever he went."

During that first year of Jebb's life, Rachel worked mornings and Jerry, afternoons. At the end of the year, however, Rachel again quit her job because she was pregnant with Bryn, and Jerry took a full-time position as a printer with MCC.

Having tasted the benefits of shared parenting and part-time employment, Rachel and Jerry realized that they would want to find such an arrangement at some point again in the future. It actually took them three years to land their present situation. Jerry still works as a printer with MCC, but now on a three-quarter-time basis. He puts in three ten-hour days. Rachel also works with MCC as a librarian 20 hours per week. Jerry's ten "extra" hours per week are a concession both to their need of income to make house payments and to MCC's need for help in the busy Production Room.

Some MCC administrators were hesitant about Jerry's moving to part-time employment, fearing that it would open the door to similar requests and that it would create administrative hassle and additional paperwork for the organization. Since then, however, at least one administrator has acknowledged the benefits of Rachel and Jerry's working arrangement.

"Our family has been very supportive, except at the very beginning. At first their attitude was, 'Rachel, you are supposed to be at home' and 'Jerry, how can you support your family on part-time work?' But now they don't blink



• **Mennonite Women Writers**

• Good Books has published *Dr. Frau: A Woman Doctor Among the Amish*. It is written by Grace Kaiser, a physician who served the Amish in Lancaster County, Pa. for 28 years.

• The first issue of *Dialogue About Women*, a newsletter for MCCers working with women in Africa, was published in June. Edited by *Mary R. Tanney* of MCC Sudan, the purpose is to

share experiences in order to help develop a relevant model for women in development. Tanney wrote in the first issue that existing models have failed to reach poor, illiterate women in rural areas. She blames this on expatriate agencies who draw up projects without first assessing local resources, talking with women at a grassroots level or sharing decision-making power with them.

• Herald Press has published *Add Justice To Your Shopping List* by *Marilyn Helmuth Voran*. Voran is a home economist and coordinator of MCC Great Lakes' Food/Hunger/Justice Committee.

• *Ruth Obold* has written *Prepare for Peace*, an eight-lesson course that helps children at three different age levels examine the meaning of peace. It is published by Faith and Life Press.

an eye and they see the advantages of our being free to do things with them," Rachel commented.

Friends react with mixed feelings. On the one hand, old college buddies are somewhat envious of their situation "because they see what a rat race their own lives are," Rachel said. On the other hand, some friends also feel sorry that the couple is missing out on the benefits they themselves derive from pursuing careers.

But Rachel and Jerry seem to have few regrets about the choices they have made. "There's something about part-time work that's so rewarding," Rachel said. "We are mutually involved in home and work roles. Jerry doesn't have full money-earning responsibilities and I don't have full parenting responsibilities. We have time for church, for family, for recreational activities like planting a garden. We feel like our lives are so rounded." ■

Emily Will is a colleague of Rachel Miller and Jerry Lehman at MCC, where she serves as Women's Concerns Coordinator. She also worships with Rachel and Jerry as part of the Pilgrims Mennonite Fellowship.

• Please accept the enclosed contribution as evidence that I would very much like to continue receiving your publication.

I find it particularly reassuring to know that there are so many Mennonite women out there asking questions and examining issues heretofore inadequately dealt with by our tradition. This is one Mennonite publication I am indeed proud of!

—*Linda Elias, Morden, Man.*

• Enclosed find a check for \$6. Please enter my name on your subscription list. I have just found you — with great joy — don't understand how I have missed you for so long.

My personal thanks for being brave enough to fill a "BIG" need in the Mennonite church. I will look forward to each issue.

I am no longer a member of the Mennonite church. The pain was too great. But how can I help?

—*Esther Bontrager Kuhns, Goshen, Ind.*

• I have been receiving *Report* for several years and appreciate very much its combination of information, insight and provocation. You are doing an excellent job of covering women's concerns as they relate to the church today.

One issue that we as a church are currently struggling with is inclusive language in hymns, prayers and scripture. I would appreciate it if a future *Report* could address this issue.

Again, congratulations on a fine publication. Please accept this contribution to help you and your staff continue the good work.

—*Beverly Falk, Scarborough, Ont.*

Letters

• I enjoy reading the *Report*. The last issue, on housework, has helped my husband and I come to an agreement about housework. (We are newly married.) We decided that instead of struggling away separately on tasks, we would derive more enjoyment from doing housework together. Our schedules right now allow this, so let's hope it works! Thank you for your hard work—it's worth it.

P.S. I am planning to attend seminary this September and will look forward to the *Report* more than ever!

—*Linda Burr, Kitchener, Ont.*

- **Winifred Ewy** is the editor of the *Inter-Mennonite Farm Newsletter*. Based in Hutchinson, Kan., she and her husband, Lester, were recently appointed as farm community issues coordinators of MCC U.S. They are members of First Mennonite Church of Hutchinson.

- Well-known author **Barbara Claassen Smucker** received an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Waterloo in

May for her contribution to children's literature in Canada. Among the works of juvenile fiction she has written are *Amish Adventure* and *Days of Terror*.

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada has appointed **Ted Regehr** as writer and **Marlene Epp** as writer/researcher for the third volume of the series *Mennonites in Canada*. Marlene assisted her

father, Frank Epp, in writing and researching the first two volumes before his death in January. She also co-authored with him a chapter in *Looking into My Sister's Eyes: An Exploration in Women's History*, published by the Multicultural History Society of Ontario. Regehr is a history professor at the University of Saskatchewan.

- "Defining Pornography," an article by **Ann Weber Becker** of Goshen, Ind. that appeared in a recent *Report*, was reprinted in the June 24 issue of *The Mennonite*, the biweekly magazine of the General Conference Mennonite Church, and also in the June issue of *Missionary Guide*, the Illinois Mennonite Conference newspaper.

News and Verbs

- **Erma Weaver** of East Petersburg, Pa. is the new coordinator of the MCC U.S. Development Education Office. She says that feminist concerns are becoming increasingly important to her in her work.

"If one can envision a world in which men and women are allowed active participation and full expression, one can envision a world in which the rich and the poor, the north and the south, the black and the white, the owner and the worker, the earth and the human beings in it can live together in harmony and peace," Erma recently wrote.

- **Mamie Wong**, an MCC worker in Nepal who recently finished her three-year term, did much experimentation with "biofertilizer" as an alternative to chemical fertilizers. Wong, who is trained as an engineer, has noted that chemical fertilizers are often unavailable, inappropriate or too expensive for Third World farmers.

- **Anglicans in Australia** have ordained their first women deacons, despite a last-minute legal challenge and a bomb scare at the St. Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Melbourne where the ordinations took place.

- **Carol Ann Weaver** has been appointed assistant professor of music at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont. She has a doctorate in music composition from Indiana University.

- "**Wings**," an historical play of four women and their Anabaptist faith, premiered July 22-25 at Saskatoon '86, the triennial sessions of the General Conference Mennonite Church. It was written and directed by Vickie Dyck.

- **Esther Wiens** is serving as Assistant Dean of Students at the Mennonite Brethren Bible College in Winnipeg.

- **Marilyn Miller** became the first General Conference woman pastor to receive the Doctor of Ministry degree

when she graduated from the San Francisco Theological Seminary in May. She is pastor at Boulder (Colo.) Mennonite Church.

- An interdisciplinary course of study is what **Margaret Loewen Reimer**, associate editor of *The Mennonite*, is planning for her year's sabbatical, which started in September. She is taking courses in English, religion and communications at the University of Toronto. **Ferne Burkhardt** is filling in for Margaret at *The Mennonite* on a part-time basis.

- Although women were ordained as Buddhist monks 500 years ago in Sri Lanka, that possibility is no longer open to them, two West German women discovered. After a week of fasting to protest this unequal treatment of women in Buddhism, the two women were committed to a mental hospital by the Sri Lankan government. Doctors, lay Buddhists and the West German government protested the action and managed to get the women freed, but no Buddhist monks spoke on their behalf.

- **Justina Heese** of Steinbach, Manitoba, has been appointed to the Congregational Resources Board of the Conference of Mennonites in Canada.

- **Louise "Lou" Murray** is serving as research associate for the Horn of Africa Project under the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at Conrad Grebel College in Waterloo, Ont. She is a former country representative for MCC Somalia.

- **Soprano Iraina Neufeld** shared third prize in a national competition for the performance of Canadian music held in Brandon, Manitoba this spring. A native of Altona, Manitoba, Neufeld is currently studying music in Toronto and is performing at the Banff School of Music this summer.

- After being defeated twice in past years, a motion to allow women to run for student president at Bethany Bible Institute was passed by a 85 percent vote recently. The Mennonite Brethren school is in Hepburn, Sask.

- **Mary Kay Burkhalter Larson**, a General Conference missionary in Botswana, is one of four co-authors of *Botswana Family Health Survey*, a 250-page governmental survey of health and family planning published in 1985.

• **Women's Resources**

- *Women of the Rural South* is a new full-length report that documents the economic activities, circumstances and problems of rural women in the southern United States. The 59-page report traces the disappearance of job opportunities in the industries, especially textile and apparel, that have traditionally employed women. Individual copies are

available for \$10 from the Southeast Women's Employment Coalition, 382 Longview Drive, Lexington, Ky. 40503.

- The 1986 *Women in Ministry Conference* will be held Oct. 24-25 at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind. June Alliman Yoder will give three addresses and a variety of workshops will be offered. A \$20 registration fee includes two meals on

Saturday. For more information contact LaJane Yoder, 3003 Benham Ave., Elkhart, Ind. 46517.

- *Older Women Around the World: Conversations in Nairobi* is a publication now available from the American Association for International Aging. The publication follows conversations at various sessions on women and aging at the Women's Decade Forum

last summer in Nairobi. It is available for \$4 from the AAIA, 1511 K Street N.W., Suite 1028, Washington, D.C. 20005.

Illustrations in this issue were drawn by Teresa Pankratz of Chicago. Please do not reproduce without permission.

- **Ksai Batshinyi**, one of the first two Zairian Mennonite women to graduate from theological school in Kinshasa, is assisting General Conference missionary Richard Derksen in the department of evangelism and church life.

- As a means of expressing solidarity with South Africans who are struggling against apartheid, Women for Racial and Economic Equality has initiated a **consumer boycott of the Beatrice Corp.** The company has extensive manufacturing operations in South Africa and does not abide by the Sullivan principles. Among the more than 40 Beatrice subsidiaries are Hunts, Peter Pan, Playtex, Danskin, Eckrich, La Choy, Max Factor, Samsonite and Tropicana. For more details write to WREE, 130 E. 16th Street, New York, N.Y. 10003.

- **Karen Kenagy** of Albany, Ore. became MCC Assistant Secretary for Latin America in mid-August. Rich Sider has been named Secretary for Latin America, replacing Herman Bontrager, who will administer Peace Section International. Kenagy formerly served with MCC in Bolivia.

- MCC worker **Judie Menadue** recently testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Criminal Justice about her experiences with death-row prisoners. A lawyer, Menadue recruits volunteer attorneys to represent people on death row in Louisiana.

- **Grace Sommers Whitehead** was ordained to the ministry by Parkview Mennonite Church of Kokomo, Ind. in May.

- The first **Japanese woman** to serve as pastor of a Mennonite congregation was commissioned in April. Thirty-year-old Mayumi Miki is serving the Fukuoka Mennonite Church. She is a graduate of Tokyo Biblical Seminary.

- **Naomi Stambaugh** is planting a Brethren in Christ church in Winchester, Va. She is Associate Director of Admissions at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Va.

- **Janet Janzen**, a 1986 graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, is one of two recipients of a Herman Enns Memorial Scholarship. She and her husband, Rick, will become co-directors of service programs for MCC Saskatchewan.

- **Doris Rempel**, a 1986 graduate of Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, will become pastor of Hope Mennonite Church in North Battleford, Saskatchewan. She is originally from Sardis, British Columbia.

REPORT is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *Report* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee

on Women's Concerns.

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